

STATE OF IOWA

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West Des Moines Teacher Receives \$25,000 Milken Award

(Des Moines, October 15, 2002) – A West Des Moines school teacher today received a 2002 Milken Family Foundation National Educator Award. Paula Olson, a first grade teacher at Phenix Elementary teacher, learned of the honor during a surprise announcement made in person by Governor Thomas J. Vilsack and Jane Foley of the Milken Family Foundation. The Milken Educator honor carries with it a \$25,000 financial award.

Vilsack praised Olson's leadership role in creating a strong early childhood education center with a community-wide focus on reading and literacy. Phenix was recognized by the State legislature's education committee as an exemplary and model early childhood program in 1999. Olson has taught at Phenix for 15 years. She is a native of Ogden, Iowa and graduated from Iowa State University with a degree in Elementary Education.

Olson is one of two Iowa elementary educators receiving the Milken Educator Award for 2002. The other recipient will be notified in a separate surprise announcement later today.

A blue ribbon committee appointed by the Iowa Department of Education selects the Milken Educator recipients in a confidential process that does not include a nomination or application.

Olson and the other Iowa winner will be presented their \$25,000 awards during ceremonies at the Milken Family Foundation National Education Conference in Los Angeles in June 2003. A total of 100 educators in 46 states will receive a 2002 Milken Educator Award. The award goes to secondary educators one year, followed by elementary educators the next.

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